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UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

VOLUME II

In the Matter Of:

J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER

HISTORIAN'S OFFICE
INVENTORY CONTROL

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Pages..... 164 - 329

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INDEX

WITNESSES

| | DIRECT | CROSS |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------|
| J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER | 211 (cont.) | |
| MERVIN J. KELLY | 180 | 194 |

PAPICH
BOWND

UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

PERSONNEL SECURITY BOARD

In the Matter of
J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER

Room 2022,
Atomic Energy Commission,
Building T-3,
Washington, D. C

The above entitled matter came on for hearing,
pursuant to recess, before the Board, at 9:30 a.m.

PERSONNEL SECURITY BOARD:

MR. GORDON GRAY, Chairman,
DR. WARD V. EVANS, Member.
MR. THOMAS A. MORGAN, Member.

PRESENT:

ROGER ROBB, and
C. A. ROLANDER, JR., Counsel for the Board.

J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER,
LLOYD K. GARRISON,
SAMUEL J. SILVERMAN, and
ALLEN B. ECKER, Counsel for J. Robert Oppenheimer.

were useful in early warning and in radar generally and that they understood that some of the arguments against the feasibility of early warning were obsolete, because of discoveries that had been made in the meantime.

I have no further testimony on this committee.

BY MR. GARRISON:

Q Then we come to certain studies of defense that you made or engaged in -- defense against atomic warfare -- perhaps you can say a word to the Board about them.

A Yes. This can be fairly brief.

The Department of Defense adopted during the Korean crisis a practice of letting our large segments of the defense problem as study projects to a university. The university would then call in competent people from the rest of the country. I have referred to Project Wista as one such. There was one under contract I think only with the Air Force at MIT. Its code name was Charles. Its purpose was to have a look at air defense. I had the faintest connection with this. I believe I was present at some of the briefings. It led to the establishment of the Lincoln Laboratory, which is a very large radar and air defense laboratory operated by MIT for the Air Force.

Another such study which I had suggested was set up through the Army and the NSRB, I guess, and that was to have a look at civil defense -- a very tough and unstudied

problem, really. I was not very active. I was on the advisory council or the policy council, but I met rather rarely. I did give one or two briefings and I talked with General Nelson about the problems of writing an effective report. There were a great many recommendations, many of them have been made public. I think those which attracted the greatest attention were that if civil defense was to be manageable at all, early warning and improved military interception, improved over what we then had or were planning, were an essential part of making civil defense manageable. With these conclusions I concurred.

The third item here is that largely growing out of the work of some people on East River, and in particular Dr. Berkner and Dr. Rabi, there came a conviction not only that one had to have a better continental defense, but quite a lot could be done about it.

I was consulted about the wisdom of it, and I agreed to hold a study during the summer of 1952, two months of intensive study, at the Lincoln Laboratory, which would concern itself with both an evaluation of the prospects of continental defense and recommendations of how to get on with the job.

The Lincoln Laboratory was working very hard and very effectively on some aspect of this problem. The notion of the summer study was to look at parts that had not been